

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of reducing blood urea nitrogen concentration in a subject's serum, the method comprising:

administering to the subject a composition comprising an oligopeptide having activity in reducing blood urea nitrogen concentration in the subject's serum as determined by a mouse renal ischemia reperfusion test,

said oligopeptide comprising the sequence QGV or MTRV (SEQ ID NO:1).

2. The method according to claim 1 wherein the subject is undergoing acute renal failure.

3. The method according to claim 1 wherein the oligopeptide consists of AQQV (SEQ ID NO:2).

4. The method according to claim 1 wherein the composition is administered to the subject parenterally.

5. The method according to claim 1 wherein the composition is administered to the subject orally.

6. The method according to claim 1 wherein the composition consists essentially of oligopeptide and PBS.

7. The method according to claim 1 wherein the oligopeptide is of synthetic origin.

8. The method according to claim 3 wherein the oligopeptide of the composition is administered to the patient intravenously in an amount of from about 0.25 to about 10 mg/kg body mass of the subject.

9. The method according to claim 1 wherein the oligopeptide is from three (3) to twelve (12) amino acids in length.

10. The method according to claim 1 wherein the composition consists essentially of from one to three different oligopeptides.

11. The method according to claim 1 wherein the subject is undergoing persistent oliguria.

12. The method according to claim 1 wherein the subject's kidneys are not producing more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  ml urine per hour per kilogram body mass of the subject.

13. The method according to claim 10 wherein the subject has a serum potassium level greater than 6.5 mmol per liter serum.